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PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHJMA #0138 0241325
ZNY CCCCC ZZH ZUI RUEWMCF2395 0241335
P 241325Z JAN 07
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0000
INFO ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 000138

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE; NEA/IPA FOR
WILLIAMS/SHAMPAINE/BELGRADE; NSC FOR ABRAMS/DORAN/WATERS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/23/2027
TAGS: [PREL](#) [KWBG](#) [PBTS](#) [KHUM](#) [KPAL](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: EXCAVATION BEGUN TO CONNECT SILWAN TO THE OLD CITY

CLASSIFIED BY: CONSUL GENERAL JAKE WALLS, PER REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

1. (C) SUMMARY: THE ISRAELI ORGANIZATION ELAD HAS BEGUN EXCAVATION OF A TUNNEL FROM THE POOL OF SILWAN TOWARDS THE WESTERN WALL, ACCORDING TO ISRAELI HUMAN RIGHTS NGO IR AMIN. IR AMIN REPORTS THAT APPROXIMATELY 30-40 METERS OF TUNNEL HAVE ALREADY BEEN COMPLETED WITHOUT THE APPROVAL OF THE PALESTINIAN HOMEOWNERS ABOVE THE TUNNEL OR THE ISRAELI ANTIQUITIES AUTHORITY. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) DANNY SEIDEMANN, FOUNDER OF THE ISRAELI HUMAN RIGHTS NGO IR AMIM, TOLD POLOFF JANUARY 23 THAT THE ELAD ORGANIZATION HAS BEGUN EXCAVATION OF A TUNNEL AND HAVE COMPLETED 30-40 METERS. SEIDEMANN SAID THE TUNNEL LEADS FROM THE POOL OF SILWAN ALONG THE HERODIAN ROAD TOWARDS THE AL AQSA MOSQUE AND IS INTENDED TO CONNECT TO THE HERODIAN TUNNEL EXCAVATIONS AT THE WESTERN WALL. ACCORDING TO SEIDEMANN, NEITHER THE PALESTINIAN OWNERS OF THE HOMES ABOVE THE TUNNELS NOR THE ISRAELI ANTIQUITIES AUTHORITY HAVE PROVIDED PERMISSION FOR THE EXCAVATION. SEIDEMANN SAID THAT HE BELIEVES THE EXCAVATIONS WILL EXACERBATE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN TENSIONS IN THE AREA.

3. (C) (BACKGROUND NOTE: THE ELAD COMMUNITY, WHICH WAS FOUNDED BY DAVID "DAVIDELEH" BEERI, OPERATES THE "CITY OF DAVID" ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK IN THE EAST JERUSALEM NEIGHBORHOOD OF SILWAN. THE ISRAEL NATURE AND NATIONAL PARKS PROTECTION AUTHORITY GAVE ELAD CONTROL OF THE 24 DUNAM (6 ACRE) ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK, WHICH IS BELIEVED BY SOME TO BE THE SITE OF THE BIBLICAL CITY OF DAVID. CONTROVERSY HAS BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH ELAD, WHICH HAS USED THE ABSENTEE PROPERTY LAW TO TAKE OVER A NUMBER OF PALESTINIAN HOMES. END NOTE).
WALLS